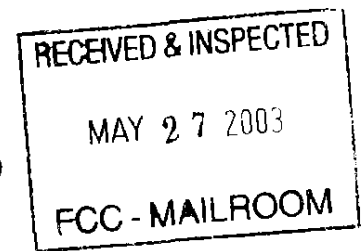


FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED



Date: 21 May, 2003
To: FCC Commissioners:
Re: Docket No. 02-277

ORIGINAL

I am writing to you today to express my opposition to the FCC's recommendation to relax (or possibly eliminate) the regulations governing media ownership in the United States of America.

I have followed this issue as closely as I can. Believe me – it is not easy. Surprising? Whether you are for or against this proposal it is an action that affects all people who desire to be informed and active citizens. And yet the silence in most media has been quite suggestive. I have also been quite surprised at the speed with which this proposal has raced along, avoiding the pitfalls of too much public comment or scrutiny.

I am tired of the talking heads telling me that there isn't a problem with fewer and fewer companies owning the means of information dispersal in our society. Why, after all we have the internet. What more do you want?

First of all, the internet is not a cure-all for providing the information we need in order to be active citizens in an increasingly complex world. Secondly, I am old enough to remember when the internet was young, insane, and anarchic. The same people who want to be able to own every television stations, radio station, and newspaper in my community have been slowly pushing to bring "order" to the internet. Perhaps I am paranoid, but I believe that means "ownership".

Please consider the fact that we, the people, have become increasingly disengaged from the Republic we claim to love. Spreading the cancer of a company owning dozens of "local" news sources and creating fake "local news rooms" from one corporate building in another state will not reverse this disturbing trend. Watching one newspaper after another being bought out by a handful of companies silences voices – it does not increase them. How many cities and towns even have more than one newspaper? How many cities and towns have a newspaper not already owned by one of the handful of media giants?

America needs more voices. More information, and greater diversity of information, is the lifeblood of democracy. And that is what we are talking about, correct? What is best for democracy – not what is best for a few corporations?

Respectfully,

Todd Barnell
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